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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHENGDU 000247

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/CM, G, DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/29/2033

TAGS: PGOV PHUM CH

SUBJECT: SENIOR TIBETAN MONK ON SECURITY SITUATION IN WESTERN SICHUAN

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CLASSIFIED BY: James A. Boughner, Consul General, U.S. Consulate General, Chengdu.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: During the recent visit to Chengdu of G Special Assistant/Office of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues/Jeannette Windon, a senior monk from the Yachen Gar Monastery in western Sichuan's Ganzi Prefecture discussed China's widespread security clampdown in Tibetan areas (including the reported April shooting incident of 15 protestors in Tongkor) and passive resistance to patriotic education campaigns. According to the monk, although his monastery continues to provide schooling and medical care at its schools and clinics, this will likely end soon with the implementation of the "3 plus 6 Program" in Ganzi designed to secularize monastic management and separate religion from education and medical care services. End summary.

Monastery Housing Destroyed in 2001 and 2005

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¶2. (C) On October 24, Congen accompanied G Office of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Jeannette Windon to a meeting in Chengdu with Yega Rinpoche, General Director of the Yachen Gar Monastery Democratic Management Committee (DMC) and a well-respected leader of the monks there. According to a January 2006 Ganzi TAP official report, local authorities in 2001 ordered 853 houses at the monastery destroyed and expelled 1100 monks and nuns. The monastery had attracted about 2500 students, including many ethnic Han Chinese Buddhists as well as Buddhists from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. Those students from outside areas were forced to return home by government order. Again in 2005, rooms of "over quota" monks and nuns were destroyed and they were forced to return home. A 2001 International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) report with photographs of the forced demolition of the living quarters of 800 monks and nuns can be seen online at URL [tinyurl.com/2001yachenmonasterydemolitions](http://tinyurl.com/2001yachenmonasterydemolitions).

Security Oversight at Yachen Gar

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¶3. (C) Yega Rinpoche (strictly protect) noted that the number of monks and nuns at the monastery has since climbed back to around 18000. The increase in number is a "secret" since local Communist Party religious authorities are reporting to their bosses that the number of monks and nuns living at the monastery has declined. Yega Rinpoche added that government regulations forbid Chinese Buddhists from making long stays at Tibetan monasteries and strictly limit internal travel by Tibetan monks in order to prevent the development of sympathy for Tibetan

Buddhism and respect for the Dalai Lama among ethnic Han Buddhists.

¶4. (C) After unrest began in Lhasa in March and quickly spread to other Tibetan areas, there were small demonstrations at the monastery but no violence. The monks continue to refuse government demands to raise the PRC flag above the monastery or to participate in "patriotic education" classes. Initially, soldiers moved in to the monastery but were later withdrawn to the second checkpoint seven kilometers from the monastery; the first checkpoint is two kilometers away. Fifty Public Security Bureau (PSB) officers and a government work team subsequently moved into the monastery and remain there. PSB officers often drive their cars around in the evening with flashers on to intimidate the monks. The schools and health clinics that many monasteries operate for local people have been closed this year.

The health clinic and school at Yachen Gar monastery has remained open, although health clinics and schools have been closed at some smaller monasteries. Yega Rinpoche added, however, that he heard the government recently held a meeting about monastic schools and health clinics and he now expects the school and clinic at the Yachen Gar Monastery will be closed as well.

¶5. (C) The monks and nuns at the Yachen Gar Monastery pray in many small huts and underground rooms. Government work teams who try to implement re-education programs for the monks find gathering the monks together for study sessions practically impossible without orders from Yega Rinpoche or another leading monk there. Accordingly, Yega Rinpoche and the other leading monk have tried to absent themselves from the monastery. One evening, Yega Rinpoche returned to the monastery and was immediately presented with an order for his signature that would have ordered the monks to gather for patriotic education. He made the excuse, "I haven't read it yet, I will get to it later." Early the next morning he left the monastery traveling

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cross-country and avoiding the police roadblocks.

¶6. (C) Since he left the monastery, Yega Rinpoche has been able to travel with no more than the "usual harassment" given to other Tibetan monks. He complained that when a bus carries Tibetans in Ganzi Prefecture, it is stopped to record IDs. Buses with only ethnic Chinese are not stopped. In Chengdu, Tibetans are sometimes denied hotel accommodations or the use of public baths and taxis. Police are immediately notified when Tibetans come to a hotel. When asked why the crackdown had been relatively mild at his monastery, Yega Rinpoche said, "We are a large monastery so the authorities are being careful; conditions are worse at the smaller monasteries."

Tongkor Shooting Incident

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¶7. (C) Yega Rinpoche indicated he had heard about and believes to be true several incidents of Tibetans being shot to death during the unrest this spring, including the shooting to death of 15 Tibetan protestors at Tongkor in Ganzi in April. Yega Rinpoche said he understood that protestors at Tongkor had gone to the county seat to complain; local police beat up some protestors; other protestors then began throwing rocks at police and then the police shot into the crowd. Background information on the alleged incident can be found in an International Campaign for Tibet report at URL [tinyurl.com/dongkor15killedApril08](http://tinyurl.com/dongkor15killedApril08).

Thank You

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¶8. (C) Yega Rinpoche offered profuse thanks to the United States for its concern about Tibetan issues, adding, "Our religion is very important to us, it is all we Tibetans have." He continued, "We Tibetans are helpless when confronted by the Chinese superpower. We look to America for support, just as a child looks to its parents." Earlier in the day, both of the

two ethnic Tibetan businesspeople who spoke with us in their shops in Chengdu's Tibet town also made a point of saying how grateful they were for the concern the United States has shown for Tibetans.

Background: New Ganzi TAP Monastery Control Measures

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¶9. (C) The latest effort in Ganzi (Kardze) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture to bring monasteries under closer government control is the "3 plus 6 Program" announced by Liu Daoping, the Ganzi Communist Party Committee Secretary on September 27. Some of the measures such as limiting the numbers of monks have been tried earlier and proved unsuccessful.

The three measures are:

- Expel all extra (over the authorized quota) monks and nuns in the monasteries.
- Secularize monastic management.
- Separate religion from education and medical care.

The six measures are:

- Build complete monastic leadership management system.
- Build complete monks/nuns management system.
- Build complete Buddhist activities management system.
- Build complete monastery-founded schools management system.
- Build complete reincarnation identification management system for the reincarnation of Living Buddhas.

(Ganzi Ribao, September 28, 2008).

¶10. (U) This message was cleared by G Special Assistant/Office of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues/Jeannette Windon.  
BOUGHNER